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AUTHOR Bannister, Linda
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ABSTRACT

"Metaphor: Theory and Practice," a senior/graduate seminar taught at Loyola Marymount University, was something of an experiment. Its goal was to engage students in theoretical explorations of metaphor, in analysis of metaphor growing out of those theories, in the creation of their own metaphoric texts, and finally, in the development of new theories of metaphor based on their work in the course. The course began with the exploration of various theories of metaphor: those of I. A. Richards, Wayne Booth, Paul Ricoeur, Max Black, Laurence Perrine, and several others. Students also read poetry by Galway Kinnell, W. H. Auden, Dorothy Parker, and Sylvia Plath. They read prose by Poe, Nancy Mairs, Henry James and Marquez, everything from "Like Water for Chocolate" to "Harlem Sweeties." In all of these texts, the students observed rhetorical transaction at work. Defined as a mutually creative inter-relationship among author, text and audience, rhetorical transaction becomes a fruitful way of understanding the creative force of metaphor. One graduate student investigated the metaphorical aspects of humor, positing that jokes are funny because of a shared social context between the speaker and the audience, and a willingness to "associate" or connect two disparate or incongruous concepts, a process that can be called transactional as well as metaphoric. (Contains course syllabus.) (TB)

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Metaphor as Rhetorical Transaction: A Composing Heuristic

CCCC 1995 - Washington, DC
March 25, 1995
Forum L.8 11:00-12:15

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Linda Bannister, Chair, English Department
Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles, CA 90045

ED 386 738

Abstract

The art of making and apprehending metaphor is a highly charged rhetorical act. Analyzing examples of metaphor in literature, film, and art as multilayered transactions among "author," "text," and audience reveals much about the creative function of metaphor in human thought and discourse. Metaphor enables new thought and new language, a process inspired by rhetorical interaction.

Introduction

In the fall of the last year I taught a course at Loyola Marymount University called "Metaphor: Theory and Practice." The course was something of an experiment, with the goal of engaging the students in theoretical explorations of metaphor, in analysis of metaphor growing out of those theories, in the creation of their own metaphoric texts, and finally, in the development of new theories of metaphor based on our work. This ambitious course proved to be an extraordinary experience for most of us, and surprisingly, we accomplished most of what we set out to do. Today, I would like to offer you a brief window on what we discovered.

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I'll begin by describing our course.

We began by exploring various theories of metaphor -- those of I.A. Richards, Wayne Booth, Paul Ricoeur, Max Black, Laurence Perrine, and several others -- and applying those theories to poetry, prose, film and art. I've provided you with a packet of handouts which includes a course description, a syllabus, and the culminating "long-paper" assignment for the course. These documents will provide you with the structure of the course and the resources for our discourse, but the spirit of the work we did is less amenable/reducible to a handout.

We read poetry by Galway Kinnell, W.H. Auden, Dorothy Parker, and Sylvia Plath. We read prose by Poe, Nancy Mairs, Henry James and Marquez, everything from Like Water for Chocolate to Harlem Sweeties. We screened Dr. Strangelove, Citizen Kane and The Birds. We looked at paintings by Mondrian, Kokoschka, Vermeer and Picasso. And in all of these metaphorical "texts" we noticed striking similarities of execution. That is to say, each author/artist/director had imbued their texts with metaphor, but it was not that the metaphors were similar thematically, rather that they were similar structurally and strategically. I noticed (and my students became convinced) that in all cases, metaphor was a discourse act, a transaction between writer, text, and reader. In short, the interdependent acts of writing, reading and apprehending metaphor are collectively a rhetorical transaction. As rhetorician Ross Winterowd argues, the process of making meaning is really a transaction, "for both the rhetor and his or her audience are, in complex ways, involved with the meaning making" ("The Rhetorical Transaction of

Reading," 1986). Although all reading may be so described, reading metaphor is dramatically transactional, utterly rhetorical.

For example, there's a great scene in Dr. Strangelove when Slim Pickens, who plays the role of the pilot of an American aircraft carrying atomic weapons, leaps aboard a bomb and rides it cowboy-style, whooping and waving his hat as it, and he, fall to earth. The metaphoric transaction occurs as we participate in director Stanley Kubrick's vision of bomb as plunging bronco and Commander/Cowboy Slim as wildly unaware American hero. The audience creates an image of an irrational mankind being borne along by its technology to inevitable self-sought destruction. In the rhetorical transaction completed while making meaning of this cinematic metaphor, the viewer/reader creates a new understanding of the politics of the bomb. The cowboy/bronco--pilot/bomb relationship is fraught with possibility, with several layers of ambiguity. Certainly one of the most intriguing is the creation of the image of soldier as uneasy rider, indeed as rider not in control of his steed. All of the attendant folklore about the relationship between rider and horse may also come into play as the rhetorical transaction is completed.

In all of the theories we explored and developed in our metaphor seminar, we observed this rhetorical transaction at work. Defined as a mutually creative inter-relationship among author, text and audience, rhetorical transaction becomes a fruitful way of understanding the creative force of metaphor.

I'd now like to briefly summarize two of the theories of metaphor my

students created that led me to posit the overarching notion of metaphor as rhetorical transaction. One graduate student, MJ Robinson, investigated the metaphoric aspects of humor, positing that jokes are funny because of a shared social context between the speaker and the audience, and a willingness to "associate" or connect two disparate or incongruous concepts, a process that can only be called transactional as well as metaphoric. Another student, Anne Marie Albertazzi, explored parody, and hypothesized that the self-consciously figurative and deceptive nature of parody was in fact metaphoric. She argues that parody works because readers willingly participate in a rhetorical transaction where identification is sought and then undermined. "The writer aggressively recasts a known text" and the reader is asked to re-envision the text, to "de-identify it" so that the parody reveals new insight about the original text. Parody is then, a metaphoric and cooperative venture-- richly transactional.

Students can be assisted in their efforts to understand metaphor and in their efforts to generate ideas for writing by using the concept of metaphor as a rhetorical transaction. Creating metaphors and investigating them as rhetorical transactions can be an heuristic procedure. This handout shows you how.

Metaphor as Rhetorical Transaction:
A Composing Heuristic

Linda Bannister
Chair, English Department
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Handout Packet for:
CCCC 95 - Washington, D.C.
March 25, 1995
Forum L.8 11:00-12:15

Abstract:

In "Metaphor: Theory and Practice," a 1994 senior/graduate seminar I taught at Loyola Marymount University, my students and I explored several classical and contemporary theories of metaphor, including Aristotle's, I.A. Richards', Laurence Perrine's, Max Black's, and Paul Ricoeur's. We applied these theories to a variety of texts, fictional, poetic, cinematic and artistic. As a final, integrating project, students developed their own original theories of metaphor and applied them to selected texts.

Though each student developed her own unique theory of metaphor, the class found several commonalities in our theories and agreed that a certain principle guided our work. We concluded that the art of making and apprehending metaphor is a highly charged rhetorical act. Our analyses of metaphor in literature, film and art as multilayered transactions among author, text and audience revealed much about the creative function of metaphor in human thought and discourse. We agreed that metaphor enables new thought and new language, a process inspired by the rhetorical interaction implicit in metaphor.

During our Forum, I'll summarize the work of our course and describe the new theory of metaphor we developed, focusing on its usefulness as a heuristic for composing. Creating even "preliminary" metaphors and exploring them as rhetorical transactions can help student writers respond more effectively to writing assignments across the curriculum.

TITLE: Special Studies: Metaphor: Theory and Practice
TERM: Fall, 1993
COURSE NO: ENGL 598.01

PROFESSOR: Bannister

1. Pre-requisite(s): Senior or Graduate class standing.

2. Course description:
   (a) Objectives
   -To investigate the rhetorical effects of figurative language, especially metaphor.
   -To read and discuss theories of metaphor, particularly those which will aid our understanding of how metaphor works.
   -To practice using figurative language, especially metaphor, in our non-fictional and fictional prose.

   (b) Content:
   -Reading, discussion and implementation of classical tropes.
   -Reading, discussion and implementation of various theories of metaphor, drawing on literary theory, rhetoric, philosophy and linguistics.
   -Reading and discussion of eloquent metaphor in fiction and non-fiction.
   -Creation of effective figurative language, especially metaphor.

3. Text(s)
   (a) On Metaphor. Edited by Sheldon Sacks, University of Chicago Press, 1979.
   (b) Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure. Eva Kittay, Clarendon Press, 1991.
   (c) Selected readings on reserve, LMU Library.

4. Course Format:
   Limited lecture; Discussion; Oral Reports, Workshop.

5. Course Work:
   2 short papers (6-7 pages)
   1 oral presentation with accompanying handout and report.
   1 long paper (12-15 pages)

6. Suitability for elective for the non-major: No

7. Comment: This course includes exciting, but very demanding, theoretical texts. Please be prepared to do some intensive reading.

Special Studies: Metaphor: Theory and Practice
EN 598.01 - Fall 1993
Linda Bannister

T TH 1:15-2:30pm

Office: Foley 319
Phone: 338-2854 or 338-3018 (Sec'y)

Office Hours:
MW 11:30-2:00
TTH 10:45-12:00

Texts:
1. Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure Eva Kittay, Clarendon Press, 1991.
2. On Metaphor Edited by Sheldon Sacks, University of Chicago Press, 1979.
3. Selected readings and handouts.

Format:
Limited lecture; intense discussion; oral reports; workshop.

Course Work:
1 Short paper (5-6 pages). 15% of grade. Due Sept. 16.

1 Oral presentation with accompanying handout (1-2 pages). 15% of grade. Due on various dates in October and November.

1 Midterm examination. 15% of grade. On Oct. 7.

1 Long investigative paper (10-15 pages). 40% of grade. Due May 3.

Class discussion. Due regularly throughout the semester. 15% of grade.

Welcome to our special study of metaphor. Avid participation in class discussion is essential. If you are a passive personality (as far as class discussion is concerned), you will need to develop speaking skills very quickly. If you think this is impossible, you probably should consider enrolling in another class. I don't want to discourage anyone, but it is important that you understand the nature of the course before we go further. Please consult me if you have any questions.

Late Paper Policy:
Unless a serious emergency prevents you from submitting a paper on time, late papers will not be accepted. A busy schedule doesn't constitute a serious emergency, since it is highly probable we are all busy most of the time.

Course Plan:
Although the focus of this course will be theories of metaphor (such as those set forth in our texts), we'll also practice making metaphors, and look at other forms of figurative language. We'll survey classical tropes and figures to provide a foundation for our study. All students will have

ENGL 598: METAPHOR: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Long Investigative Paper (10-15 pages)
Due Tuesday, December 7 at 5:00 p.m.
40% of Grade

Your final paper assignment is an opportunity for you to combine your creative and critical skills. You will be expected to do some research for this paper, and to provide the appropriate MLA parenthetical citations as well as a "Works Cited" list or a Bibliography.

The assignment has three parts:

1. Select from your collected works or write a brief piece of fiction, poetry, or non-fiction in which you demonstrate your artistry as a metaphor-maker. Short-short stories (1-5 pages), poems, brief essays or autobiographical sketches are all appropriate choices. The kind(s) of metaphors you create are up to you; they can, but need not be, extended.

2. Find a short piece (1000 words or less) of nonfiction, fiction or poetry you enjoy <u>and</u> consider artful, excellent.

3. Select a theory (or theories, but no more than three) of metaphor that you'd like to work with. You may choose a theory in our text or one presented orally in class by me or any member of our class (including you).

Once you've authored the original text (#1), chosen a text you value (#2), and selected a theory or theories (#3), you're ready to begin. Your job is to find out as much as you can about the text and the theory/theorist you've selected by doing research in the library. If you can find <u>no</u> secondary materials on the text and the theory/theorist, you should select another text and theory/theorist.

Your assignment is to use your original text, the "valued" text, and the selected theories of metaphor to create your own theory of metaphor. Use the texts as examples; use the theories to inform or support <u>your</u> hybrid or original theory. Your theory of metaphor should account for how metaphor works, why it's important (or not), and should advance our understanding of metaphor in general. Good luck!

Metaphor as Rhetorical Transaction:
A Composing Heuristic

CCCC 95 - Linda Bannister
Loyola Marymount University - Los Angeles

Definition: Viewing metaphors as rhetorical transactions means considering them as a mutually creative inter-relationship among author, text and audience. In other words, author, metaphoric text and audience interact in order to create new meaning.

Example: In Shakespeare's metaphor "all the world's a stage," the tenor (or literal) term of the metaphor "world" and the vehicle (or figurative) term of the metaphor "stage" are associated, productively. The reader, in processing this text, creates a new understanding of both tenor and vehicle. The writer and the reader collaborate with the text, recreating the tenor, "world," enlarging it to include "theatrical" and "artifice." The vehicle, "stage," is also enlarged, taking on the "global." Neither term is the same after the rhetorical transaction of the metaphor has occurred.

Application: In any writing assignment, the writer is asked to respond to a rhetorical problem; regardless of the purpose of the assignment, the writer must solve problems of relating text, audience, and "self" or writer. A useful way to begin is to create a preliminary, heuristic metaphor. The student uses her topic as the tenor in a metaphor she creates to explore the topic as a rhetorical transaction. In even the most pedestrian or clichéd of metaphors, the writer invariably creates a new understanding of her topic. It is in the careful and thorough exploration of the ambiguities inherent in the association of the tenor and the vehicle that the writer gains fresh perspective on the topic.

Example: A student decides to write a paper on the value of a liberal arts education. The following metaphor is a possible starting place.

tenor	vehicle
liberal art education	building a fire

A preliminary investigation reveals that the various courses that make up a liberal arts education are kindling for the fire of enlightened self-awareness. The match that ignites the fire may be a small thing, like a vital moment in a classroom discussion, or a line in a poem read for a core literature class. But the resulting "flames" can permeate a life, influencing career choice and future education.

Students may continue the transactive, metaphoric process a long as it is fruitful and may, of course, explore as many metaphors as they like. Students can be encouraged to make a two-column associational list, such as the following:

<u>liberal arts education</u>	<u>building a fire</u>
coursework	kindling
discussion on ethics in Professor X's class	match
commitment to social justice	long-lived embers